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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSUL 000040

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SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS/NORTHERN IRAQ: MAYOR FEARS KURDISH DESIGNS IN NINEWA

REF: A) MOSUL 28; B) MOSUL 25; C) 2005 MOSUL 190; D) 2005 MOSUL 149

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CLASSIFIED BY: Cameron Munter, PRT Leader, Provincial  
Reconstruction Team Ninewa, State.  
REASON: 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

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SUMMARY  
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11. (C) Mayor Bassem Jejo is frustrated by what he sees as blatant efforts by the Kurds to usurp his and the Ninewa provincial government's authority over Telkaif District. He accuses the Kurds of loading the district council with KDP members, allowing Peshmerga to operate checkpoints on major thoroughways, and establishing Kurdish schools and Asayesh (Kurdish intelligence) offices. Jejo believes such efforts do nothing but cause tensions between the Kurds and minorities. He asked for USG help removing Kurdish flags from public buildings and protecting the integrity of local governments. End Summary.

12. (SBU) PRT Leader and PolOff met with Telkaif Mayor Bassem Jejo at the St. Hermizo Monastery in Al Qosh on March 28.

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TENSIONS WITH THE KURDS  
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13. (C) Kurdish encroachment has been a recurring theme in Ninewa, impacting many in different ways. For Telkaif Mayor Bassem the issue strikes a strident chord. "The KDP," (or Kurdistan Democratic Party), "keeps interfering with our work," he said. They did not understand that the district of Telkaif (which runs from Ninewa's northern border in Al Qosh near Dohuk province, to Telkaif city in the south just outside of Mosul) was not under Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) jurisdiction, said Jejo.

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SIGNS OF ENCROACHMENT  
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14. (C) Jejo said tensions had been building again between the Kurds and minorities over the past few months. The KDP had set up Asayesh (Kurdish intelligence) offices throughout the district, as well as an education directorate and Kurdish

schools. There were now two Asayesh offices in Telkaif city alone, claimed Jejo, one called the "Intelligence Directorate of Mosul" (because he said the KDP could not open the office in Mosul itself) and the "Intelligence Directorate of Telkaif." Jejo said the KRG education directorate office was setting up schools, following a KRG curriculum, and only hiring teachers and administrators from outside the area. They were teaching Arabic to Christian students, admitted Jejo, but only Kurdish to the Yezidi [NOTE: A "chicken and egg" identity problem exists between Yezidis and the Kurds over whether one belongs to the other. The question has caused major rifts between the Kurds and Yezidi, especially among the Yezidi in Sinjar (ref a)]. The teachers were not qualified and were beholden only to the KRG. Other problems included what Jejo claimed was an increase in Peshmerga checkpoints. There were two new checkpoints where Peshmerga were harassing motorists on the roads to Shekhan and Faydah, he claimed. In Batnaya village in southern Telkaif district the KDP was building headquarters offices in residential areas (ref b). Such problems were not helping ease problems between the Kurds and minorities.

15. (C) Worse still, according to Jejo, was Kurdish interference in local and district politics. He said the Kurds were "successful" with separating the mayor from the district council (ref c). In the past the mayor presided over the council, but the Kurds worked to install a district president position instead. Jejo believed the Kurds were working to control local governments to exert their influence over politics in the province. Throughout Telkaif district, said Jejo, KDP members were springing up as either mayors or district presidents. These "Kurdish controlled" local governments were responsible for many unlawful acts, such as awarding government-confiscated property to KDP loyalists and requiring bribes for conducting security background checks on housing applicants. Money allegedly allocated to the Christian community during the CPA was instead funneled through the KRG Ministry of Finance, claimed Jejo (ref d). As a result, the funds were dispersed as "political favors," rather than for projects to help benefit the Christian community. "They even bought generators right before

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the election to buy votes," claimed Jejo. Asayesh, on the other hand, was arresting and detaining prominent persons in the community that they believed were "disloyal" to the Kurds, he said. As a result people were leaving their homes in towns and cities for smaller villages on the outskirts of the district. He asked for USG assistance as a last resort to help keep the Kurds in line, by removing flags from public buildings and protecting the integrity of local governments.

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COMMENT  
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16. (C) Mayor Bassem Jejo is a member of the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM), Iraq's largest Christian political party, which is fervently anti-Kurd. He raised a valid point about the Kurds (primarily the KDP): they appear to be overstepping the boundary separating Iraqi Kurdistan from Ninewa province. Members from the Shabek, Yezidi, Arab, and even Kurdish communities have echoed this same sentiment. Rival Christian political parties agree, as well. It is a common refrain among the non-Kurdish community: the Kurds, they say, are bent on domination of eastern Ninewa.

MUNTER